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ActNow BC

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2007EDU0082-000671
May 24, 2007

Ministry of Education
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts

$4M FOR PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT TO HELP KIDS GET MOVING

VANCOUVER – Students in B.C. elementary and middle schools will soon have better places to play thanks to a $4-million contribution under the Province's ActNow BC initiative, Education Minister Shirley Bond, Solicitor General John Les and Minister of State for ActNow BC Gordon Hogg announced today.

"Parents throughout B.C. have told me during my school district visits that their school playgrounds are getting older and need upgrading," said Bond. "In fact, just this month, the B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils passed a resolution at its annual general meeting asking for safe play equipment for all schoolchildren. We've listened and we're responding. This funding will help improve school playgrounds across the province."

Twenty five per cent of B.C. children aged 2-17 are overweight or obese. The number of overweight teens has doubled in the past 25 years and obesity cases have tripled. Having better access to safe, modern playground equipment will help kids form healthy lifestyle habits while they're young.

"These grants for playground equipment build on our government's commitment to support our children and youth in achieving the highest levels of fitness while still having fun," said Les.

The playground funding supports government's ActNow BC goal of encouraging B.C. kids to increase physical activity levels and the ActNow BC campaign goal to "make every move a good move." It also supports the Province's Pacific Leadership Agenda, which aims to improve British Columbians' health and renew the province's public health-care system.

"New playground equipment will encourage kids to get back to basics, to play, and start interacting with one another," said Hogg. "Active kids will lead more productive, healthier lives and will help us lead the way in North America in physical activity and healthy living."

ActNow BC is a partnership-based cross-ministry health and wellness initiative that promotes healthy living choices to improve the quality of life for all British Columbians. A key goal of the initiative is to make British Columbia the healthiest region ever to host an Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in 2010.

Through the ActNow BC initiative, the Ministry of Education will contribute $1 million for playground equipment. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General will also contribute $1 million this year from community gaming grants and then another $1 million each year for the next two years. Ministry of Education funds will flow through the B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC), which will then distribute grants to Parent Advisory Councils (PACs). Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG) funds will go directly to PACs.

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"We are delighted that the government recognizes the importance of play equipment to the health of children. Our members have been very concerned about the state of disrepair of play equipment and the cost of replacement," said BCCPAC chair Kim Howland. "This grant will be used to assist parent advisory councils with the huge financial costs connected to playground equipment replacements."

In addition to the new playground funding, other recently announced ActNow BC strategies include Healthy Living Guides for Families, with tips and ideas on how parents can help their children be physically active and eat nutritiously and the continued expansion of the School Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program throughout British Columbia.

For more information on ActNow BC, visit www.actnowbc.gov.bc.ca.

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